

As there has been published by the American Antivivisection Society a pamphlet "Facts in regard to the Failure of the Bills presented to the Legislature for the Restriction of Vivisection," in which charges are made that the members of the Committee of the College of Physicians, after agreeing with the Committee of the Antivivisection Society that they would favor a proper regulation of vivisection, went to Harrisburg and violently opposed its passage, thereby breaking faith, it is proper that your Committee should make a correct statement of the facts of the case. It is true that members of your Committee, *as individuals*, did agree not to oppose a bill which was presented to them and discussed by them with members of the Antivivisection Society, but the further allegations contained in said pamphlet published by the Antivivisection Society are in many respects incorrect. The animus of the bill agreed upon was to give to the College of Physicians of Philadelphia the power of granting licenses for the performance of vivisection, and to prevent the performance of scientific experiments upon the lower animals by unlicensed persons in the State of Pennsylvania.

A meeting was held in Harrisburg between the Committee of the Pennsylvania Legislature and individual members of your Committee and a representative Committee from the American Antivivisection Society, and it was then found that the bill which was offered by the representatives of the American Antivivisection Society was, in several particulars, different from that which had previously been acquiesced in by members of your Committee.

Your Committee regret that they are unable to state the exact nature of these changes in as full detail as is desirable, or to present any documentary evidence in regard to them. Early in the proceedings before the Committee of the Legislature, Dr. Mitchell asked for a copy of the altered bill, which was given to him by one of the representatives of the American Antivivisection Society; towards the end of the proceedings he was asked to lend this document to one of its supporters, and it was not returned to him. After his arrival home, Dr. Mitchell wrote to the Committee of the American Antivivisection Society for his copy of the amended bill, and was told in reply that it had been mislaid. Some of the changes in the bill we are very clear about. We believe that there was an alteration with regard to the penalties for the infringement of the act; we are sure that the right to examine into records to be kept by the College of Physicians was materially enlarged, and that an enacting clause had been added which stated that the bill was to go *immediately* into activity.

Of these changes the addition of the enacting clause was most vital, indeed, was so serious that your Committee could not with it accept the measure. In the first place, your Committee had previously most distinctly stated that they had no power to bind the College to any action whatever, and that they did not know that the College would accept the position of Trustee in which it was to be placed by the law. Your Committee represented this fact to the Committee of the American Antivivisection Society at Harrisburg, and also that it would require time for the College to acquiesce in the position assigned to it, and that further, if the bill went into immediate operation, it would work grave inconvenience to persons at present engaged in vivisection. The representatives of the American Antivivisection Society refused positively to modify in any way the enacting clause, so as to give an opportunity for arrangements to be made.





Committee, as individuals, further considered themselves released from acquiescence in the bill by the change of front which was made by the Committee of the American Antivivisection Society. Your Committee had agreed not to oppose the bill, with the distinct understanding that the agreement was to be considered in the measure of a compromise that was to end all further action upon the subject, but the representatives of the Antivivisection Society at Harrisburg made an announcement and repeatedly affirmed that they would not be satisfied by the bill as a permanent measure, and would continue the agitation. Their statements were tantamount to the open declaration that the proposed measure, if enacted into a law, was simply to be used as a means of harassing persons engaged in scientific pursuits, and of obtaining more stringent enactments.

Although the Committee considered themselves, as individuals, entirely released from any agreement that had been made, by the failure of the parties of the other side to fulfil their contract, they did not absolutely oppose the altered bill at Harrisburg. After it had been read, the Chairman of the Committee of the Legislature asked Drs. Mitchell and Wood whether they knew of any cases of scientific brutality in the State of Pennsylvania. Of course, having no knowledge of the existence of such scientific cruelties, Drs. Mitchell and Wood stated as much, and, in reply to further questions, expressed their belief that there was no present necessity in Pennsylvania for the passage of any law upon the subject. The Committee of the American Antivivisection Society, on being repeatedly challenged to bring forth any evidence of the existence of such cruelties in the State of Pennsylvania, failed entirely to do so. After a time the patience of the Legislative Committee was exhausted, and an abrupt motion to adjourn prevailed. We left under the impression that the bill would not be acted on by the Legislative Committee until after the College could meet. Dr. Mitchell, immediately after reaching home, secured a call of the College of Physicians, to be held at the earliest possible date, for the purpose of considering whether the position of trusteeship made by this bill would be accepted by the College. A day or two later, to our surprise, we learned from the newspapers that the Legislative Committee reported the bill with a negative recommendation.

In the opinion of your Committee the failure of the negotiations shows that it is useless to attempt to combine with the American Antivivisection Society, and that if in the future legislation in regard to vivisection should ever be deemed advisable, the proper course would be for the Profession to take the initiative and proceed as an entirely independent body. Your Committee have made endeavors to discover whether any abuse of vivisection exists in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and have failed to get any information of such existence. It has been alleged by members of the Antivivisection Society that abuses exist, but such allegations have not been in any way substantiated. Your Committee would respectfully suggest for the consideration of the College the advisability of issuing a circular to physicians in Pennsylvania, in the name of the College, asking for information in regard to the existence of scientific cruelty, and to include this present statement.

S. WEIR MITCHELL.

H. C. WOOD.